

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1. **(Original)** A prosthesis to replace all or a portion of a natural facet joint on a vertebral body comprising a prosthesis body accommodating fixation to the vertebral body at or near a pedicle and without support by a lamina, the prosthesis body including a fastening element installed within the vertebral body at or near a pedicle, and an artificial facet joint structure carried by the prosthesis body at a location spaced from the fastening element, the artificial facet joint structure being adapted and configured to replace all or a portion of a natural facet joint.

2. **(Currently amended)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthesis is configured such that the fastening element is located superior to the artificial facet joint structure when the prosthesis body is fixed to the vertebral body.

3. **(Currently amended)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthesis is configured such that the artificial facet joint structure is posterior to the pedicle containing the fastening element when the prosthesis body is fixed to the vertebral body.

4. **(Currently amended)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthesis body includes a caudal structure that extends from the fastening element toward a cephalad portion of a natural facet joint when the prosthesis body is fixed to the vertebral body, and wherein the artificial facet joint structure is carried on the caudal structure.

5. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to articulate with a portion of a facet joint of an adjoining vertebral body.

6. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to replace a cephalad portion of a natural facet joint.

7. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is adapted and configured to replace a cephalad portion of a natural facet joint and articulate with a caudal portion of a facet joint of an adjoining vertebral body.

8. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is fixed to the prosthesis body.

9. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is fixed to the prosthesis body by adhesive or cement.

10. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is fixed to the prosthesis body by mechanical attachment.

11. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is removably carried by the prosthesis body.

12. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is removably attached to the prosthesis body by frictional engagement.

13. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is removably attached to the prosthesis body by a Morse taper.

14. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure comprises an insert fitted to the prosthesis body.

15. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure comprises an insert fitted by frictional engagement to the prosthesis body.

16. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure comprises an insert fitted by a Morse taper to the prosthesis body.

17. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure comprises a removable insert fitted to the prosthesis body.

18. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure pivots with respect to the prosthesis body.

19. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the artificial facet joint structure is made of at least one selected prosthetic material.

20. **(Currently amended)** A prosthesis according to claim [[1]] 19 wherein the at least one selected prosthetic material includes is selected from a group consisting of polyethylene, rubber, tantalum, titanium, chrome cobalt, surgical steel, bony in-growth material, ceramic, artificial bone, or a combination thereof.

21. **(Previously canceled)**

22. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the prosthesis body includes a bony in-growth material.

23. **(Previously canceled)**

24. **(Original)** A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the fastening element includes a bony in-growth material.

25. **(Withdrawn)** A method of replacing, on a vertebral body, all or a portion of a natural facet joint using the prosthesis defined in claim 1 to provide improved support for the spinal column, the method comprising the steps of (i) removing all or a portion of a natural articular process from the vertebral body, and (ii) fixing the prosthesis as defined in claim 1 to the vertebral body to replace the removed portion of the natural articular process with the artificial facet joint structure.

26. **(Withdrawn)** A method according to claim 25 further including a step of removing at least some of the lamina from the vertebral body.

27. **(Withdrawn)** A method according to claim 25 further including a step of removing at least part of a pedicle from the vertebral body.